

Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission  
Minutes of April 29, 2011  
Quarterly Meeting



Commissioners & Designees:

Cola, Jeanne – Chair

Aaronson, Roberta Hazen  
Bodington, Susan  
Botts, Christopher  
DeLuca, William  
Dennehy, Peter  
Fenton, William  
Flynn, Kevin  
Hammarstrom, David  
Hannifan, Chris  
Kiesel, Marilyn  
McGunagle, Joanne  
Novas, Ana

Raymond, Joseph  
Reed, James  
Ryczek, James  
Sekeres, Bonnie  
Stenning, Craig  
Taylor, Catherine  
Tierney, Terence  
Valliere, Albert  
Vanderslice, Robert (Rep. Ana Novais)  
Zaslow, Carrie

Staff:

June House  
De Los Santos, Doris  
Frumerie, Caitlin  
Kue, Simon

Marshall, Karen  
Neirinckx, Ray  
Price, Darlene  
Vittorioso, Dawn

## **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Jeanne Cola, Chair at 8:37 a.m. Jeanne then explained that Mike Tondra would not be attending and extended regrets for his absence.

## **2. Approval of December 10, 2010 Minutes**

William DeLuca moved acceptance of minutes as submitted and James Ryczek seconded. Minutes approved.

## **3. Report of Chair**

### **Introduction**

Jeanne took a moment to welcome and introduce June House, Supervisor of Community Development and Catherine Taylor, Director of Department of Elderly Affairs.

### **Acknowledgment**

RIH recently announced winners of this year's Partners in Housing awards. Susan Baxter, former HRC Chairperson, received a lifetime achievement award – this recognition has only been granted 5 times since the creation of this process.

### **Budget**

The current operating year HRC Budget has remained intact without additional reductions, as anticipated at this time of the last HRC meeting. Jeanne then announced that the Lead funding, preliminarily set for elimination, has been restored.

### **Lead**

- The HRC budget includes \$500,000/year in Lead Based Paint Hazard Elimination funds. These monies are used to match a HUD Lead Hazard Reduction allocation of \$3.1M awarded to Rhode Island Housing.
- HRC has scheduled the Lead Regulation hearing for June 8th (9am). *(Note: This hearing has since been rescheduled)*
- The Office of Healthy Housing, Housing Commission Coordinator position is currently vacant as Doris De Los Santos has been reassigned to the Governor's Office. Jeanne explained that earlier this year, the State adopted new procedures for creating and filling positions. The HRC has completed the required documentation to initiate the process of filling this position. Paperwork will be coordinated with other efforts of the Division.

### **Homelessness**

- A series of hearings on homelessness were conducted over the past several months, led by Senator Tassoni. These hearings initially focused on issues

with Harrington Hall, a shelter for approximately 100 men in the Pastore Complex in Cranston. The State conducted some improvements to the facility. The HRC has been working with the House of Hope, operating agency for Harrington Hall, to consider alternative buildings in the Pastore complex.

- The HRC is working with RIH and other parties to secure a consultant to update the State's Strategic (10-Year) Plan to End Homelessness.
- The Governor has signed an Executive Order reestablishing the State's Interagency Council on Homelessness. Mike Tondra, OHCD Chief will Chair the Council. Jeanne said that she and Catherine Taylor will also serve on the Council.
- The HRC has been working with the Governor's Office, United, RI Foundation and RI Housing towards the staffing of the State's ICH. The Governor's Office is considering several dates in May and the exact meeting date should be set during the first week of May.

### **BHRI**

- Activities have been selected for the final round of BHRI funding.
- The Commission is reminded that this round constitutes the final cycle of the 4-year affordable housing bond. The HRC continues to seek opportunities to fill the gap remaining by the expiration of this funding.
- At the next quarterly meeting of the HRC, a presentation of projects funded and accomplishments realized will be made.

### **NOP**

- Activities have been selected for the remainder of the \$1.5M in NOP funding from the current operating year. The Governor's budget has not included any State resources for NOP but has requested RI Housing fund the program at the \$1.5M level from its own resources.

### **Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) Resources:**

### **CDBG**

- **The CDBG program** was greatly impacted by the most recently enacted budget changes. Over \$900,000 has been cut from the State's nearly \$6M annual allocation. This year, the State has recaptured approximately \$800,000 in Program Income from recipients. This amount will mitigate the effects of the national reduction, but the State will have to consider the impact of this reduction in the long-run if this level becomes the norm. Use of other CDBG funding mechanisms such as Float Funding/Interim Financing and the Section 108 program will be considered.

Kevin Flynn noted that although the program received a \$900,000 cut, nearly \$800,000 has been returned to the state from the town of North Providence. He then said that the use of funds could last another year. Albert Valliere asked why the funds were returned. In response, Kevin said that the funds were not appropriately utilized.

- **CDBG-DR** - The State's CDBG, Disaster Recovery distribution plan has been approved by HUD. Municipalities are drafting applications, which will be submitted by mid-May. The State has received a total of approximately \$9M from the \$100M allocation nationally.
- **HPRP/HEARTH-ESG**
  - The State's HPRP continues to operate. Several programs are set to phase-out in the coming months.
  - The State is still awaiting HEARTH regulations to be published. Depending on the allocation, this program may (in part) fund HPRP-type activities.
  - The application workshop for this year's Consolidated Homeless Fund has been scheduled for May 16th.
- **NSP** - Projects funded under the State's NSP1 program continue to operate. The State's NSP3 plan was approved by HUD and funds were allocated to nearly \$5M in projects.

**Other items for discussion:**

- The May meeting of the HRC has been cancelled. Notice of the next meeting will be sent out as soon as a date is identified.

4. Building Homes Rhode Island ("BHRI")

Discussion/Resolution(s) Regarding BHRI Adjustments

Resolution(s) to Approve Funding: BHRI

Discussion/Resolution(s) Regarding NOP Adjustments

Resolution(s) to Approve Funding: NOP

Jeanne explained that the Bond Distribution Committee meets with partnering RIH, who reviews and underwrites bond applications. Jeanne took a moment to thank the Committee for their hard work during the lengthy process.

As this is the final round of the BHRI Bond, additional processes that were reviewed to ensure that all projects that received previous funding awards were on target and continued to move forward. Jean then said that if the projects were not moving forward, the funding was recaptured; all recipients received a letter of intent notification.

**BHRI Deobligations:**

Brandywyne	\$ 10,000
Cardinal Lane	\$ 37,082
Maplewoods	\$280,172
Riverside Landing	\$ 23,121

TOTAL \$350,375

Next, Jeanne introduced Ray Neirinckx who then asked for the approval of the allocation of \$3,941,705 under the Building Homes Rhode Island Program and Neighborhood Opportunity Program for the following:

**Rental \$1,653,847**

Omni Development (83 units)	\$ 774,003
NeighborWorks BRV (38 units)	\$ 716,529
Olneyville Housing (39 units)	\$ 163,315

Waiting List/Alternates:

NBRV balance of deobligation	\$ 133,471
Operation Stand Down (6 units)	\$ 260,000
Veterans for Tomorrow (20 units)	\$ 400,000

**Homeownership \$ 930,675**

Olneyville Housing	\$ 260,000
SWAP (50 units)	\$ 128,681
SWAP (2 units)	\$ 115,000
Prov. Revolving Fund (single family)	\$ 65,000
Pawtucket Valley (single family)	\$ 65,000
Habitat for Humanity-Greater Prov (single family)	\$ 52,750
Habitat for Humanity-Greater Prov (single family)	\$ 52,750
Prov. Revolving Fund (single family)	\$ 52,291
Prov. Revolving Fund (2 units)	\$ 50,000
Habitat for Humanity-Greater Prov (single family)	\$ 37,750
House of Hope (single family)	\$ 36,453
SWAP (Townhouse)	\$ 15,000

**N.O.P. Operating \$1,357,183**

House of Hope CD (1 unit)	\$ 94,200
NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley (38 units)	\$ 308,640
Olneyville Housing Corporation (39 units)	\$ 297,240
Pawtucket Citizens Development Corporation (5 units)	\$ 337,320
Realty Endeavors for Affordable Community Housing (6 units)	\$ 203,760
103 Clay Street, LLC (4 units)	\$ 22,185
NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley	\$ 93,838

At this time, Ray asked if anyone had any questions. The following discussions took place:

Bob Vanderslice asked how close North Smithfield will be to the 10% Affordable Housing goal? Ray said that off hand, he was unsure; however, he does believe that the town is close. Mr. Flynn said that 38 additional units would bring the town close to the 10% goal.

Jim Reed asked if the units were occupied. In response, Ray said that all the units are vacant and boarded.

Marilyn Kiesel asked if a stipulation was in place for the homes to remain as affordable housing once they are sold. Ray said yes, they will remain as affordable housing. Jeanne Cola added that the funding dictate long term affordability.

Mr. Valliere asked Ray to explain the disbursements for operating funds. In response, Susan Bodington said that individuals on SSI or minimum wage workers can take advantage of this program. The tenants pay 30% of their wages for rental costs and the remaining balance is paid by NOP. Susan then explained that an operating account is established for the remaining balance and it is then projected for ten years to ensure the rents will be covered during that time.

Bonnie Sekeres asked how the fund disbursements are determined. Jeanne Cola said a Request for Proposals (RFP) process is in place. All organizations for-profit and non-profit are invited to provide applications and present their projects for consideration under these funds.

As there was no further questions, Jeanne summarized the motion as follows:

- Award a total of \$3,941,705 in funding; which will be broken out to three rental projects totaling \$1,653,847 with three alternative projects being awarded if funds are available.
- Twelve homeownership projects totaling \$930,675.
- Seven NOP projects receiving \$1,357,183 in operating support over a ten year period.

Jeanne then asked for a motion. Al Valliere moved approval and Roberta Hazen Aaronson seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

## **5. Office of Homeless Update**

Jeanne introduced Darlene Price who then discussed the following items:

## **Policy and Planning**

### **Coordinating Committee Activities/Involvement**

- State's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness.
  - Worked with Rhode Island Housing on several draft requests for proposals that would hire a successful consultant to update the plan.
  - Staff will continue to participate on the new applicant review committee.
- Emergency Shelter Task Force
  - Met as a committee to forward plans and strategies to open four winter shelters.
  - Last year, the Consolidated Homeless Fund set aside \$75,000 for four providers who would operate winter shelter sites.
  - Assisted with the preparation of the official Winter Plan Strategy for the Office of the Governor.
  - With our assistance, 132 shelter beds were made available this winter; eight winter shelter sites were set up this winter in Rhode Island.

## **Management and Budget**

- New CHF Application Cycle
  - Staff is preparing for the mandatory CHF Workshop; which is projected to occur by the end of May.
  - ESG funding resource requirements and title will change. The requirement will change to a multi-part application for funding and the title will change to Emergency Solutions Grant.
  - The total amount available will be roughly \$3M.

## **Coordination of Activities among State Agencies and Municipalities**

- Veterans Administration Summit
  - Staff attended the Federal and State Veterans Administration Homeless Summit.
  - Coordination efforts will continue for the HUD-VASH program vouchers and the new Emergency Contract Bed per diem; which shelters bed funding with the VA.
- Universal Application Committee
  - Work with RIH and mental health care providers to address long-term length of stay of 100 shelter residents.
  - Coordinate care and streamline the housing application process for this population.
- Office of Child Support Services: Project Restore
  - OHCD is a partner and staff represents the agency on the oversight committee.
  - This demonstration program provides case management to parents and children who are involved with the Office of Child Support Services.

- RI Works Advisory Council
  - Staff continues to work as a conduit between family shelter programs and the DHS RI Works program.
  - A series of RI Works documents for the hardship applications were forwarded to the CHF shelters and discussed with the committee.

### **Outreach and Education**

- Ocean State Recovery Housing
  - Addressed the group during their regular monthly meeting on housing information, resources and choices for people staying in sober housing.
- HMIS Data Quality
  - Staff has been giving support to the HMIS technical staff on upgrading data input and quality output from provider agencies.
  - Staff also assists RIH in quality assurance review of data reports required by HUD before submission.
- Project Connect and Point In Time Count
  - Finalized the Point In Time (RIH) and Project Connect (OHCD) for presentation before the Coordinating Committee and reporting to HUD. Results were: 213 attended Project Connect state-wide and 31 counted as unsheltered people.

### **Fostering and Supporting Non-profit Organizations**

- Emergency Food and Shelter Board
  - Continue to provide assistance to United Way staff on application revision, application review and provider site visits as an Allocations Committee member.
  - Staff initiated a joint project with United Way and Statewide Planning to create several GIS maps to show allocations, program locations and program outcomes.

In Conclusion, Darlene asked if anyone had any questions or comments. The following items were discussed:

Jim Ryczek, for clarification purposes, said that the \$75K provided by the State partially funded four of the eight Winter Shelters that were established. The Emergency Shelter Task force successfully obtained donations from local corporations; which totaled \$200K. Citizens Bank donated \$20K, The Municipal Diocese donated \$10K and Johnson & Whales University donated \$5K. The remaining balance was donated by donated by individual private donors. Jim pointed out that it took a substantial amount of effort to continue the operation for Winter Shelters. He then noted that he expects that the same efforts will continue for next winter. Lastly, Jim said that the Coalition for



the Homeless will conduct a Point In Time checkpoint in September to understand how many Shelters will be needed for the upcoming winter months.

Kevin Flynn took a moment to recognize Senator Tassoni (represents the Town of Smithfield). Kevin explained that he conducted the hearings for the Homelessness and throughout that time, Senator Tassoni demonstrated his compassion and heartfelt interest for supporting the Homeless. Kevin then thanked Jim Ryczek and other advocates for their support during the testimony. Jim Ryczek echoed Kevin's remarks.

Jim then took a moment to update the Commission on the Interagency Council. He said that Legislation has passed the full Senate. Jim believes that this will improve the Executive Order. He then added that Representative Barton will sponsor on the House side.

## **6. Announcements**

Jeanne noted that the next HRC meeting, which was scheduled for May 20<sup>th</sup> will be cancelled. The next HRC meeting will be held in late June.

Susan Bodington said that HUD announced the balance of funding for the Continuum of Care in RI was awarded for everything that was applied for. Operation Stand Down will be fully funded, new supportive housing units for Veterans and some additional Shelter Plus Care vouchers were awarded.

Bob Vanderslice announced that the Health Department's Healthy Housing conference will be held on May 18<sup>th</sup> at the Quiddnessett Country Club. Additionally, Bob said that the Health Department is working on a Grant with RIH for Health Impact Assessments. He then said that if anyone is interested in participating, they should contact him.

## **7. Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments.

As there were no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 9:46 a.m.